



**City of Bloomington  
Environmental Commission**

**MINUTES**

7:00 pm, Thursday, 19 February 2015  
City Hall – McCloskey Room, 401 North Morton Street

1. Introductions (3 min)

Present: Chaim Julian, Diane Jung, Kriste Lindberg, Michael Litwin, David Parkhurst, Dedaimia Whitney, Linda Thompson, Alicia Reinersman, David Cohen

Absent: Carrie Albright, Andrew Carty, Sean Gorman

Guests: Anonymous, concerned citizen; Amy Rhodes, new resident and Master's student Ball State University; David Debikey, Global Gifts store manager

2. Approval of December 2014 minutes (3 min)

- Unanimous passage of December minutes

3. Public comment (5 min)

Anonymous

This guest attempted to get information regarding polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in Bloomington over the course of a week, contacting various City and State departments. His house stands just a few blocks away from the Lemon Lane Landfill, an EPA Superfund site for PCB cleanup. He expressed concern about the lack of available data and government involvement with the site. After following the topography of the land, he noticed stormwater from the landfill flowed into streams treated by the Illinois Central Spring Treatment Plant. Upon visiting the plant, he requested a tour and the “right-to-know information” regarding water treatment chemicals and current PCB levels. He said that workers promptly asked him to leave and threatened police involvement. He believes he “unearthed a whole swamp of criminal activity” and wants the EC to help him find PCB and water treatment chemical data. He also wants to be toured around the plant and learn about the water treatment process. The EC committed to helping him find sources of information about PCBs. Linda also agreed to meet with this guest to further discuss this information.

4. Committee reports & discussions (55 min)

A. Planning Committee & Sr. Environmental Planner (15 min: Linda)

1. Monroe County Parking Garage

- The nine-story garage will be located across the street from City Hall in a vacant lot. Although planned primarily for County employees, the garage might also be open for Farmers' Market parking on Saturdays.
- The roof will be used for parking, and solar panels will be installed on top of the elevator shafts to power lights.
- The first story will likely be used as an overflow area for emergency situations, particularly for inmates. The first floor might also become a work release facility.
- Regarding green features, the developers have a green wall plan. The Planning Commission requested more information about this plan and urged the developers to plant more trees.
- The Planning Commission would like the developers to reconsider the height, aesthetics, and the possibility of a work release.
  - o The Zoning District indicates that the first floor should be used for commercial purposes.

2. College Mall Whole Foods
  - Sears will be leaving College Mall and will be replaced with a Whole Foods.
  - The mall will have a main door between the current Applebee's and Sears locations, facing west. From that point north, the developers will demolish the current Sears building and parking lot.
  - The Whole Foods will not be as close to the Target as the current Sears store; a parking lot will serve as a gap between the buildings
  - Two buildings in out-lots will be restaurants. A Panera and new brewpub will be built near the Whole Foods.
  - The plan features several rain gardens, modern aesthetic, new signs, new landscaping, and a reconfigured entrance off Third Street and College Mall Road.
3. Rented Property Renovations
  - The property is on the south side of Delilah's Pet Shop at the intersection of College Avenue and 11<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - The house currently contains two apartments, and the owner plans to add two more apartments to the back of the house.
  - Linda wants to make sure the owner's landscape plan meets standards.
4. Sudbury PUD Parcel O
  - There is a proposal for an apartment complex, duplexes, and single-family homes on Sudbury Drive.
  - Nearby high quality woodlands, sinkholes, springs, steep slopes, and a riparian buffer serve as constraints to this project. Developers plan to leave alone the woodland, sinkholes, and riparian buffer. The nearby floodplain area will be protected and the developers will create a partial trail system from Tap Road.

B. L4L Natural Landscaping (10 min: Diane)

- Representatives from the Monroe County Stormwater Services spoke with Diane, wanting collaborate to help them meet their educational outreach needs.
- Diane worked with service learning and fine arts classes to develop a new design for the L4L sign. After these efforts, the Stormwater group hired a graphic designer for the sign, which visualizes the effects of lawn care on water. The design is still being modified.
- Diane took the current design to the Monroe County Stormwater Board. As a result, Elisa from the Solid Waste District expressed an interest in putting their logo on the sign.
  - This topic will be placed on the Agenda as a discussion item in March. Diane would like to communicate via email in advance to determine potential collaboration issues.

C. Tree Commission (5 min: Dedaimia)

Jim Holdhouse, a retired accountant, attended the February 18<sup>th</sup> Tree Commission meeting to discuss ash tree treatment options. His neighborhood contains approximately 50 City ash trees, and he expressed concern about the City not taking enough steps to prevent their loss. To help mitigate this issue, Holdhouse contacted experts and found a man in Vigo County who claims he can provide treatment at \$25 per tree rate. The City currently pays \$66 per tree per year, relying on the Chicago method of chemical delivery and amount. The City's Urban Forester will contact the man in Vigo County to determine how he treats trees so cheaply.

The City of Bloomington currently budgets \$25,000 per year for Emerald Ash Borer treatment. Last year, the City only treated 53 trees, spending \$7,000 of that budget. Bloomington only treats ash trees that are of high value, visibility, and are likely to survive.

Dedaimia showed the College Mall plans to the Tree Commission and discussed landscape requirements. The landscape requirements for College Mall were prior to the current City plan, and this renovation will fall under those current ordinances. Dedaimia would like to get more green space in that area. To determine which trees to

plant and add more credibility to the project, Dedaimia would like to use EC funds to hire an expert for a couple hours at an \$80 per hour rate.

D. MPO CAC (5 min: Chaim)

- Nothing of importance to the EC was discussed in the last meeting

E. Climate Action Plan (10 min: Andrew, Alicia)

F. Eco Heroes (10 min: David)

The theme for this year's Eco Heroes event follows: "Doing My Share for Cleaner Air." This event will take place in the Council Chambers on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am during the Earth Fair and Farmers' Market. Since this event will be held in such close proximity to the Farmers' Market, only beverages will be provided at the Eco Heroes event. Last year, few people ate the provided food, and it proved to be more of a waste than a benefit. This change will help cut costs and allow more funding to go into other aspects of the event. The EC has approximately \$400 leftover from last year's budget for this event.

To help make Eco Heroes more fun and increase participation, David wants to hand out goodie bags and seeds for herbs. In lieu of a red carpet, David would like a green carpet to lead into City Hall. Also to further participation, David plans to reach out to local schools, recruiting students in art, music, and science classes. David plans to send out 110 letters to business throughout the community to gain sponsors.

Submissions and sponsorships for Eco Heroes are due on Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>.

5. Old Business (25 min)

A. Climate Action Plan

6. New business (15 min)

- A. Bucket list. Discuss items on the bucket list from 5 February. Add items from Chaim and /or Carrie. Review ranking. Select one or two items for this year's project.

The bucket list allowed commissioners to select a couple projects to make the primary focus of 2015. Based on the commissioners' votes, each bucket list item received a numerical score. This year, the EC will take on expanding curbside recycling to include all apartment buildings and downtown businesses. Although the Climate Action Plan received the highest score, it was last year's project. Therefore, the EC will complete both projects this year.

Regarding the Climate Action Plan, Alicia developed an outline to discuss in subcommittee. Once the key components of the plan are revised, she will have a draft to how to the entire commission.

- B. Inventory the skills and interests of each commissioner. Determine what each commissioner can contribute to the year's project.
- C. Create a tentative timeline for this year's project(s).
- D. Make committee assignments for 2015.
- E. Discuss EC meeting times for 2015.

7. Meeting times (3 min)

- A. Next Environmental Commission meeting: Thursday, 26 March, 7:00 pm, McCloskey Room
- B. Next Planning Committee meetings: 25 February, and 19 March, 4:00 pm, Lemon Room
- C. Next Tree Commission meeting: 18 March, 9:30 am, Rose Hill
- D. Next BCOS meeting: 10 March, 6:00 pm, McCloskey Room
- E. Next Co. Environ. Quality & Sus. Com. meeting: 11 April, 5:00 pm, Court House, Nat Hill Room
- F. Next ERAC meeting: 8 April, 4:30 pm, Winslow
- G. Next MPO Citizens Advisory Committee meeting: 25 February, 6:30 pm, McCloskey Room

8. Commissioner announcements (10 min)

## A. Food Charter Proposal (David Parkhurst)

The primary idea behind this resolution is to get the City and County governments to promote food security, creating a well-functioning food system, sustainable methods of production, processes, distribution, et cetera. The resolution follows:

The Bloomington environmental commission recognizes that continued availability of adequate nutrition. Nutritious food is a critical feature of a sustainable community. We applaud the food charter proposed by the Bloomington Food Policy Council (BFPC), which recognizes the many considerations that must be given to food, including the side effects of its production, transport, and disposal to provide that availability in an environmentally sound and sustainable way. Therefore, be it resolved that the City of Bloomington Environmental Commission urges the Bloomington Common Council and the Monroe County Commission to adopt the food charter proposed by the BFPC.

At this stage, some people have suggested revisions to the proposal, which would require another meeting and would cause further delay. The City Council was going to consider the proposal on February 4<sup>th</sup>, but it got pushed back to late March or Early April. To help expedite the process and gain support, David would like the resolution to come from the EC.

The EC voted unanimously in supporting this resolution.

## B. Mayoral Candidates

- Dedaimia would like to get mayoral candidates speak about their environmental stances at monthly EC meetings.
- Democracy for Monroe County will be having a forum for mayoral candidates at the end of March.
- David Debikey has scheduled an event with mayoral candidate, Darryl Neher, at his house on Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup>. He invited EC members to this event to ask questions.

C. Democracy for Monroe County will be having their monthly meeting on March 5<sup>th</sup> at Bobby's Colorado Steakhouse, discussing transportation. Bloomington Transit General Manager, Lew Mey, will attend.

D. The Bloomington Human Rights Commission has launched a new fair neighbor initiative, and they are asking restaurants around town to commit to a set of requirements.

## E. ERAC (Mike)

- ERAC will write a letter in support of continuing the deer cull next year.
- The Sycamore Land Trust received the \$1,000,000 Bicentennial Trust Fund grant to buy more land.
- The City Parks Department is starting Adopt an Acre project, relying on volunteers to remove invasive plants. The project will start at Lake Griffy and will move to other parks if successful.
- The City Parks Department is also developing a plan to reduce mowing.

## 9. Adjournment